



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Statement on the Appointment of Max Huntsman as Inspector General for LASD

Max Huntsman, assistant head deputy of the District Attorney's Public Integrity Division, has been selected as the inspector general for the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to provide comprehensive oversight and monitoring of the sheriff's department and its jails. The Board of Supervisors will formalize the appointment at their weekly meeting on December 3, 2013.

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors Chairman Mark Ridley-Thomas, who has authored several motions asking for a civilian oversight committee and the creation of an inspector general of the Sheriff's Department, praised the board's selection of the veteran public corruption prosecutor.

"Max Huntsman is uniquely qualified for this position. He has shown that the power of the people will catch officials who abuse power. He has not only won convictions against police officers, he also has successfully prosecuted officials in Bell, Vernon, Compton and Los Angeles. This appointment is a much-needed step in the right direction," said Ridley-Thomas. "The appointment of an inspector general alone, however, will not bring true reform to the Sheriff's department. For public confidence to be fully restored there must be singularly focused civilian oversight in order to make reforms and bring forth an open process to allegations of misconduct."

Huntsman will be charged with investigating allegations of improper conduct by the department, which has been plagued by jail scandals, committee inquiries and even a federal investigation. Despite the efforts of committed professionals

within and outside the department to monitor abuses in the jail system, the problems have continued, causing death and injury to many inmates as well as hundreds of thousands of dollars in law suit settlements for the county.

The recruitment process was on-going for several months and a vetting committee was established to review the candidates' qualifications. That committee included federal judges, the Hon. Lourdes Baird and the Hon. Robert Bonner, both of whom were members of the jail violence commission; Assistant Sheriff Terri McDonald; John W. Mack, former president of the Los Angeles Urban League, and Samuel Paz, noted civil rights attorney. Former assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Drooyan served as the facilitator, but not as a voting member.

In 2011, Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky and Ridley-Thomas authored a motion for the creation of the Citizens' Commission on Jail Violence (CCJV) with the goal of determining the full extent of the custody problems within the county's jails. In September 2012, the commission released 77 findings in its nearly 200-page report. After more than a year of investigation, testimony, and sifting through over 35,000 pages of documents; the evidence of inmate abuse and jail mismanagement was clear and convincing. This past September, as a result of the U.S. Department of Justice's civil rights investigation into whether Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department deputies have abused inmates, Supervisors Mark Ridley-Thomas and Gloria Molina called for the creation of a permanent citizen's oversight commission.

"For several weeks now, citizens and advocates for reform repeatedly have issued clarion calls for meaningful participation in policing the county's largest sheriff's department in the country," said Ridley-Thomas. "The commission must have the power to ensure that its members' voices will truly be heard."

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